

PATENT

REMARKS

Claims 1-8, 17, 19 and 28-34 have been canceled without prejudice.

Claims 9, 16, 18, 20 and 27 have been amended.

Claims 9-16, 18 and 20-27 are pending.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action indicated that Claims 9-15 and 20-26 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 9 has been re-written in independent form, incorporating base Claim 7 and intervening Claim 8. Claim 9 is now allowable for which action is respectfully requested. Claims 10-16 all directly or indirectly depend from Claim 9, for which allowance is also requested.

Claim 20 has been rewritten in independent form, incorporating base Claim 17 and intervening Claim 19. Claim 20 is now allowable for which action is respectfully requested. Claims 18 and 21-27 all directly or indirectly depend from Claim 20, for which allowance is also requested.

35 U.S.C. §102

The Office Action rejected Claims 1, 3, 4, 28, 29, 31 and 32 under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by US Patent #5,661,943 to HAGEL. Applicant submits that the rejection is now moot because the Claims 1, 3, 4, 28, 29, 31 and 32 have been canceled without prejudice.

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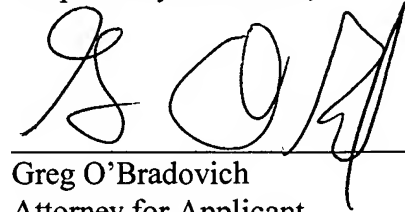
The Office Action also rejected Claims 7, 16-19 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by US Patent #6,185,894 to SISCO et al. Applicant submits that the rejection is now moot because the Claim 27 has been canceled without prejudice. Furthermore, Claim 7 has been canceled as discussed above. Claim 16 now depends from allowable Claim 9. Claims 17 and 19 have been canceled as described above. Claim 18 now depends from allowable Claim 20.

35 U.S.C. §103

The Office Action rejected Claims 2, 5, 6, 30, 33 and 34 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent #5,661,943 to HAGEL in view of US Patent #6,694,696 to HAGEL. Applicant submits that the rejection is now moot because Claims 2, 5, 6, 30, 33 and 34 have been canceled without prejudice.

If Examiner has any questions regarding this document, Applicant asks that Examiner contact the undersigned immediately by telephone.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G O B', is written over a horizontal line.

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